

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03

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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5148

INFO USCINCSO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, SCUL, ELAB, UY

SUBJECT: GOU TIGHTENS DOWN ON STUDENTS, PRESS AND UNIONS

CINCSO FOR POLAD

1. ON AUGUST 27 THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATION (CONAE) CLOSED THE TEACHERS' INSTITUTE (INSTITUTO NORMAL) OF MONTEVIDEO UNTIL DECEMBER 1974 AND CANCELLED PROFESSORS' CONTRACTS. STUDENT TRANSFER RIGHTS WERE ALSO SUSPENDED BUT MAY BE REIN- STATED IN INDIVIDUAL CASES. (MONTEVIDEO NORMAL IS LARGEST OF APPROXIMATELY TWENTY TEACHERS COLLEGES IN URUGUAY.)

2. FOLLOWING LATE JULY EARLY AUGUST STUDENT DISTURBANCES AT THE TEACHERS' INSTITUTE, THE PRIMARY SCHOOL COUNCIL, A COMPONENT OF CONAE WITH JURISDICTION OVER TEACHERS COLLEGES, WARNED THE STUDENTS ON AUGUST 7 THAT IT WAS PREPARED TO CLOSE THE INSTITUTE RATHER THAN ALLOW CONTINUED INDISCIPLINE. SMALL DEMONSTRATIONS ON AUGUST 23 AND 24 PRODUCED THE SUSPENSION OF THE STUDENTS INVOLVED AND, IN REACTION, A GROUP OF STUDENTS ATTEMPTED A FORCED BOYCOTT OF EXAMINATIONS. THIS LED TO THE CLOSURE DECISION.

3. SPORADIC INCIDENTS IN VARIOUS MONTEVIDEO SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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CONTINUED DURING WEEK OF AUGUST 19-25. SEVERAL HAVE INVOLVED FIGHTS BETWEEN EXTREMIST STUDENTS OF LEFT AND RIGHT. EDUCA-

TIONAL AUTHORITIES HAVE WARNED STUDENTS THAT CONTINUED INCIDENTS WILL BRING SUSPENSIONS AND THE LOSS OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.

4. IN LATEST PRESS ACTION, EXECUTIVE ORDERED AUGUST 26 CLOSING OF COMMUNIST PARTY NEWSPAPER "EL POPULAR" FOR 10 EDITIONS AND LEFTIST INTELLECTUAL WEEKLY "MARCHA" FOR 6 EDITIONS. CLOSURES, WHICH ARE FOR VIOLATIONS OF JUNE 27 PRESS REGULATIONS (SEE MONTEVIDEO 1996), ALSO PRESENTLY AFFECT LEFTIST PUBLICATIONS "ULTIMA HORA" AND "RESPUESTA" AND SOCIALIST PARTY WEEKLY "EL ORIENTAL".

5. EXECUTIVE, ON AUGUST 24, PROHIBITED INTER-UNION MEETINGS UNTIL SUCH TIME AS NEW LEADERS CAN BE ELECTED AND LEGAL RECOGNITION OBTAINED UNDER AUGUST 1 UNION DECREE. PROHIBITION, ACCORDING TO EXECUTIVE, AIMED AT PREVENTING EX-LEADERS OF THE OUTLAWED CNT LABOR CONFEDERATION FROM DISRUPTING LABOR SECTOR.

6. COMMENT: EXECUTIVE ACTION AGAINST STUDENTS, PRESS AND UNIONS APPEAR PART OF NEW, TOUGHER GOU POLICY TOWARD LEFT. PAO SOURCES SUGGEST "EL POPULAR" AND "MARCHA" CLOSURES ARE PART OF CONCERTED EXECUTIVE EFFORT TO DISRUPT LEFTIST PRESS. ("AHORA", ONLY FRENTE AMPLIO PUBLICATION NOW APPEARING, WAS CLOSED FROM AUGUST 16 TO 26 FOR EARLIER VIOLATION OF PRESS REGULATIONS.) UNION DECREE APPEARS AIMED AT PREVENTING RE-OCCURRENCE OF AUGUST 21 MEETING OF FORMER CNT AFFILIATES (SEE MONTEVIDEO 2586). AND NORMAL INSTITUTE CLOSING IS WARNING TO OTHER SCHOOLS AFFECTED BY STUDENT/TEACHERS INDISCIPLINE.

7. IN TYPICAL URUGUAYAN MANNER, HOWEVER, GOU TOUGH POLICY IS NOT WITHOUT MODERATING ELEMENTS. THUS ACTIONS AGAINST "EL POPULAR" NICELY TIMED TO REOPENING OF "AHORA", ASSURING AT LEAST ONE LEFTIST MEDIA VOICE. EXECUTIVE, IN ANOTHER SIGN OF RELATIVE MODERATION, RELEASED ON AUGUST 25 BLANCO PARTY DIRECTORATE PRESIDENT HOMAR MURDOCH WHO HAD BEEN DETAINED AFTER CLOSING OF THE CONGRESS. FRENTE AMPLIO LEADER GENERAL LIBER SEREGINI, HOWEVER, REMAINS UNDER ARREST.
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